



HELPING YOURSELF

By Monroe S. Miller

Casey Suit Review

As reported in the last issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS*, the U.S. Supreme Court granted a "writ of certiorari" on January 14, 1991. This means the highest court in the country will rule on the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision in the Town of Casey suit.

This case—now officially known as "Wisconsin Public Invernor vs. Mortier 89-1905" has taken on national significance. Those in our business view the possibility of local regulation of pesticides as absolutely disastrous; some even say doing business won't be possible if the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision isn't allowed to stand.

We have nearly 2,000 local units of government in Wisconsin. Can you imagine the chaos if each is permitted to pass its own laws and rules in these matters? What if your golf course was located in two different units of government, like a city and a township?

So far, common sense has prevailed. The Washburn County Court and the Wisconsin Supreme Court have agreed with us. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has taken a position against local control and communicated to federal justice department officials.

A whole lot of work has been done in the last 10 years for you, me and the rest of us managing golf courses in Wisconsin. That work has been successful.

But as Russ Weisensel says, "This is the BIG one." Your help is needed. The F/Row/T Coalition, with Russ at the helm, handled the funding for the three victories (Washburn County Court, the Wisconsin Appeals Court by-pass and the Wisconsin Supreme Court) with a modest amount of money, 82% of it from in-state sources.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision to review the case raised costs in a major way. Our attorneys have been able to use a very time efficient computerized search system to review court decisions. Now they need to study both the pro and con briefs for the final court decision.

Weisensel and our legal counsel have contacted a top constitutional law professor from the University of Wisconsin—Madison as a consultant on all issues related to this case.

Add in all the other factors of staff time, travel and office expenses, and you will see it is no minor financial undertaking.

So it seems fair that those who will benefit ought to pay. My hope is that all who read these lines will dig deep and send a contribution to help out with the expenses. Mail your contribution to:

Forestry/Rights-of-Way/Turf Coalition
2317 International Lane
Suite 109
Madison, Wisconsin 53704-3129

Green Section Turf Advisory Service

It's always a sure sign of spring—my favorite invoice arrives in the mail. It is easy to initial approval to a bill that pays for the best bargain available to each and every Wisconsin golf course.

I am speaking, of course, about the USGA's Turf Advisory Service. Now is the time the staff at the Great Lakes Region office begins to put together the visit schedule for the 1991 golf season. I never want to be left out.

Why do I view a visit from Jim Latham or Bob Vavrek so favorably? Let me count the reasons.

The first is their vast experience. Latham has, literally, been on thousands of golf courses in his thirty-some year career in turfgrass management. And although Vavrek cannot claim numbers like that, he's undoubtedly visited more than most of us. That experience makes it likely they have seen problems like yours somewhere else before and can offer advice and solutions that will save you and your golf course both grief and money.

The experience of Latham and Vavrek comes from courses all over the country, literally. Not only have they seen Wisconsin problems, they've encountered them in distant regions where answers may not have reached us through our very active peer network.

The second is their education. Latham earned a B.S. degree and a M.S. degree—both in turfgrass management—from Texas A & M. Vavrek comes to the USGA agronomist position with a degree in botany, an Ohio State M.S. in turfgrass entomology and soon will complete his Cornell Ph.D. (Professor Wayne Kussow is lending a hand to Bob with final thesis details, by the way; don't you love that Wisconsin connection!).

The third feature of the service that gives me comfort is the excellent communication among all the regional Green Section offices and the agronomists. These guys talk a lot and write even more! When they confront a troublesome problem that merits counsel from another agronomist, that counsel is there. They do not stand on ceremony; if they need help, they get it.

Try though I may, I am unable to keep on top of all the research being done in the turfgrass sciences at our nation's research universities. Not to worry! The USGA staff has access to all of this work and they incorporate it into their recommendations wherever possible. The fact is that the USGA is a major contributor to work being done to answer fundamental questions about turfgrasses and the environment.

The visit is summarized in a written report, which is used in any way you wish. Some clubs post it in the locker rooms; we usually distribute copies to all members of the board of directors.

Finally, the price is right. A half day visit is \$700—less than the cost of a single case of some fungicides we have to use. That cost is less than the actual cost; the USGA subsidizes the TAS at about \$500 per day.

For me, the best money I'll spend in all of 1991 will be that spent on the Turf Advisory Service. If you haven't tried it, please do. If you have, re-up for 1991, won't you?